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DC
BATMAN
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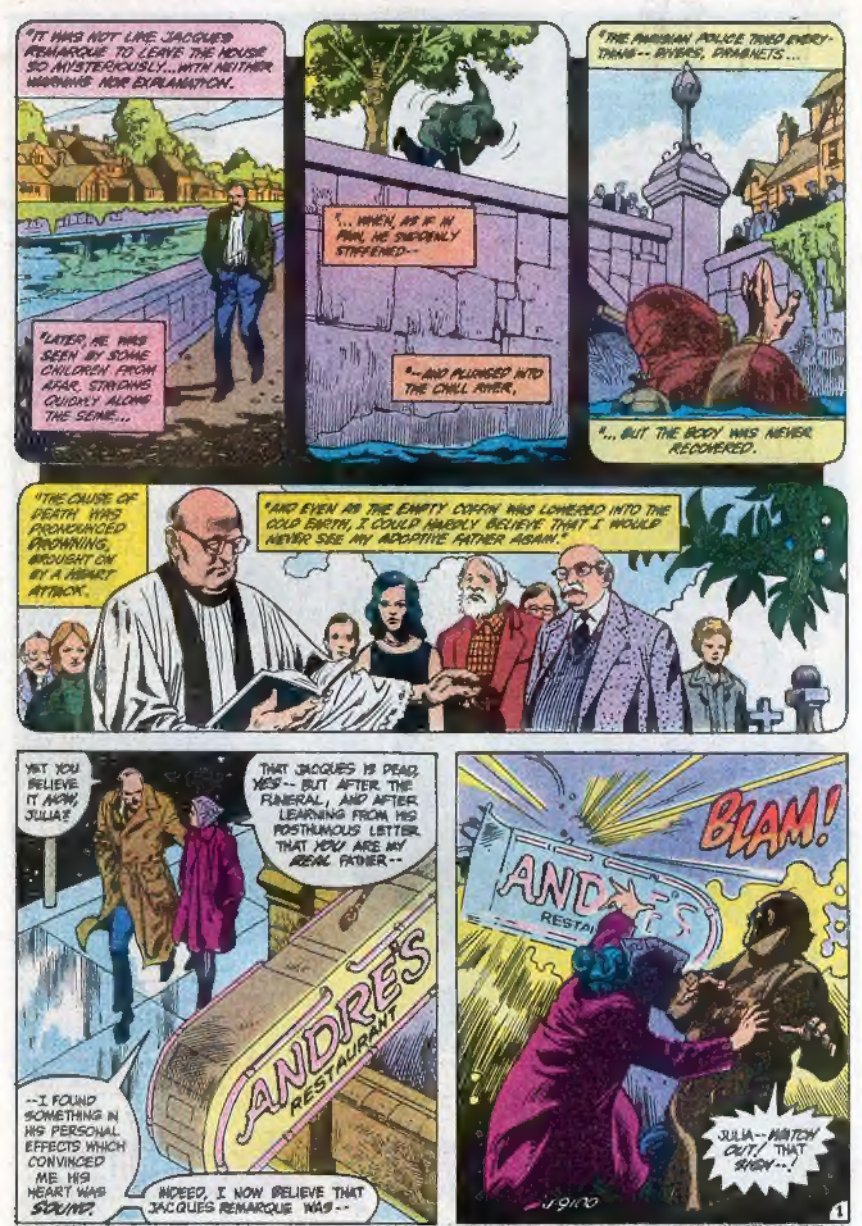
"IT WAS NOT LIKE JACQUES REMARQUE TO LEAVE THE HOUSE SO MYSTERIOUSLY...WITH NEITHER WARNING NOR EXPLANATION.
"LATER, HE WAS SEEN BY SOME CHILDREN FROM AFAR, STRIDING QUICKLY ALONG THE SEINE...
"... WHEN, AS IF IN PAIN, HE SUDDENLY STIFFENED--
"--AND PLUNGED INTO THE CHILL RIVER,
"THE PARISIAN POLICE TRIED EVERYTHING -- DIVERS, DRAGNETS...
"... BUT THE BODY WAS NEVER RECOVERED.
"THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS PRONOUNCED DROWNING, BROUGHT ON BY A HEART ATTACK.
"AND EVEN AS THE EMPTY COFFIN WAS LOWERED INTO THE COLD EARTH, I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE THAT I WOULD NEVER SEE MY ADOPTIVE FATHER AGAIN."
YET YOU BELIEVE IT NOW, JULIA?
THAT JACQUES IS DEAD, YES -- BUT AFTER THE FUNERAL, AND AFTER LEARNING FROM HIS POSTHUMOUS LETTER THAT YOU ARE MY REAL FATHER --
ANDRE'S RESTAURANT
--I FOUND SOMETHING IN HIS PERSONAL EFFECTS WHICH CONVINCED ME HIS HEART WAS SOUND.
INDEED, I NOW BELIEVE THAT JACQUES REMARQUE WAS --
BLAM!
ANDRE'S
RESTAURANT
JULIA -- WATCH OUT! THAT SHOW --!
1

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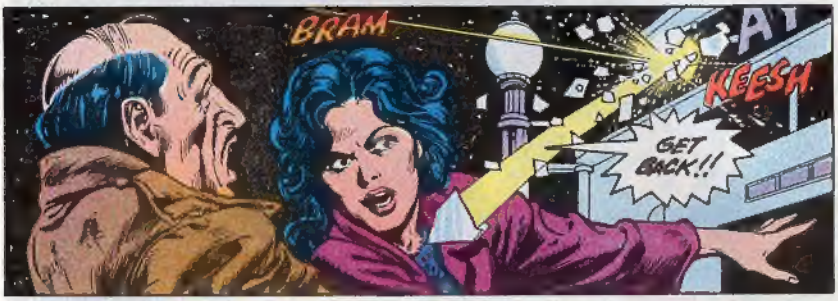
DEATH BY VIOLENCE USUALLY RIDES A DIRECT LINE BETWEEN MURDERER AND VICTIM...
...BUT THEN THERE IS THE DOMINO THEORY, WHEREBY VIOLENCE IS SET IN MOTION FROM AFAR, TO ROLLOW AN INDIRECT ROUTE OF CHAIN REACTIONS WHICH NEVERTHELESS RESULT IN DOWNFALL NO LESS FINAL.
THE THEORY IN ACTION: BULLET IS FIRED AT SUSPENSION-BRACE; BRACE SNAPS, RELEASING SIGN; AND SIGN, LIKE A MAMMOTH ELECTRIFIED DOMINO, TUMBLES DOWN AT ALFRED AND JULIA PENNYWORTH...
BAT MAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
AND IN THIS CASE, THE THEORY MIGHT ALSO BE CALLED--
IT MISSES BY INCHES-- AND THE MONTREAL STREET CORNER EXPLODES UNDER A SIZZLING CRASH OF SPARKS AND FLYING GLASS.
Target Practice
2
DOUG MOENCH writer • DON NEWTON artist • ALFREDO ALCALA inker • BEN ODA - letterer ADRIENNE ROY-colorist • LEN WEIN editor

THAT WAS A GUNSHOT, JULIA! SOMEONE IS TRYING TO MURDER US!
QUICKLY-- THAT ENTRANCE TO THE METRO ACROSS THE STREET!
BUT ANOTHER SHOT SOUNDS--
BRAM
POW
--CAUSING TIRE TO BLOW OUT--
--WHICH IN TURN CAUSES CAR TO SWERVE.
SKREEEE
FATHER--!!
SPOK
SKRASH
LOOK OUT!!
SUBWAY
KEEP RUNNING, FATHER!
ONCE WE REACH THE METRO, WE'LL BE--
3

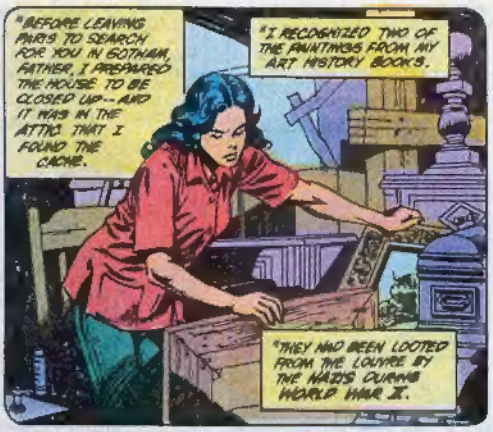


GOOD LORD, JULIA! IF YOU HADN'T PUSHED ME BACK... THAT SHARD OF GLASS WOULD HAVE SLICED MY THROAT!
OUI -- BUT WHOEVER IT IS, FATHER, THANK GOD HE IS A MISERABLE SHOT.

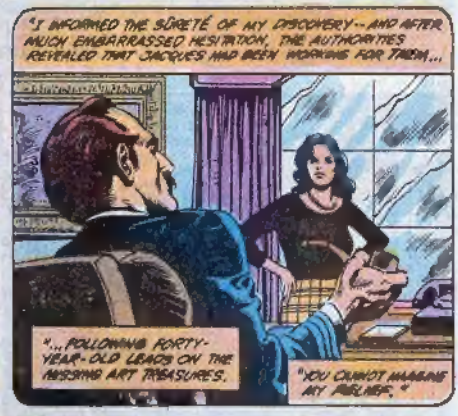
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, FATHER?
ALL THREE SHOTS VERY NEARLY SUCCEEDED IN KILLING US, JULIA --
--THE DIFFICULT WAY.
FAR FROM BEING A POOR SHOT--

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING

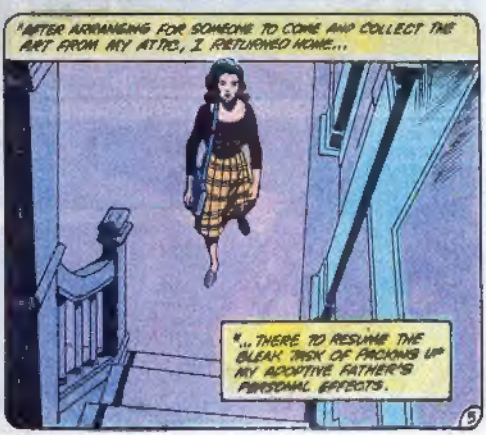
NOW EXPLAIN, JULIA-- WHAT DID YOU FIND IN JACQUES' POSSESSIONS TO CONVINCE YOU HE WAS MURDERED?
ART.
ART--?!

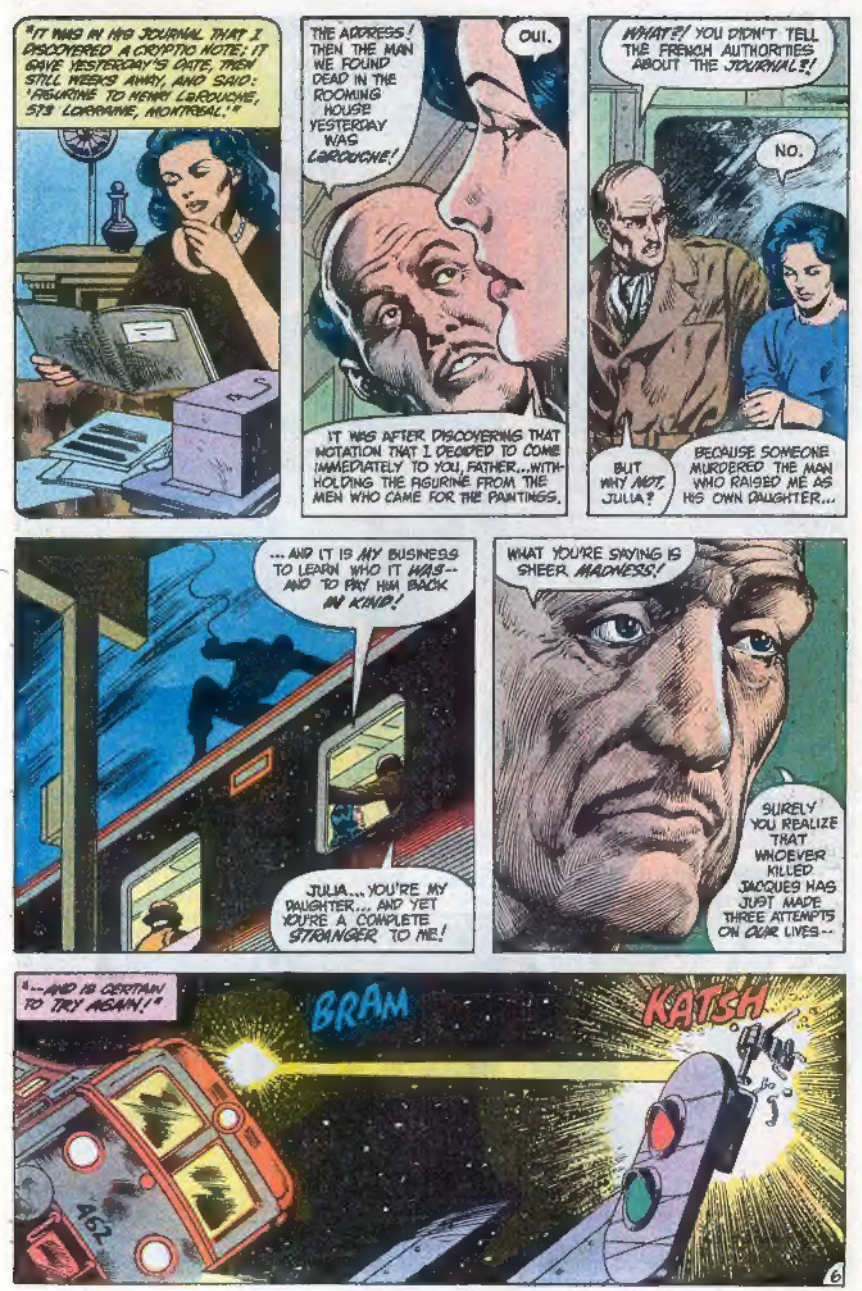

"BEFORE LEAVING PARIS TO SEARCH FOR YOU IN GOTHAM, FATHER, I PREPARED THE HOUSE TO BE CLOSED UP-- AND IT WAS IN THE ATTIC THAT I FOUND THE CACHE.
"I RECOGNIZED TWO OF THE PAINTINGS FROM MY ART HISTORY BOOKS.
"THEY HAD BEEN LOOTED FROM THE LOUVRE BY THE NAZIS DURING WORLD WAR II.

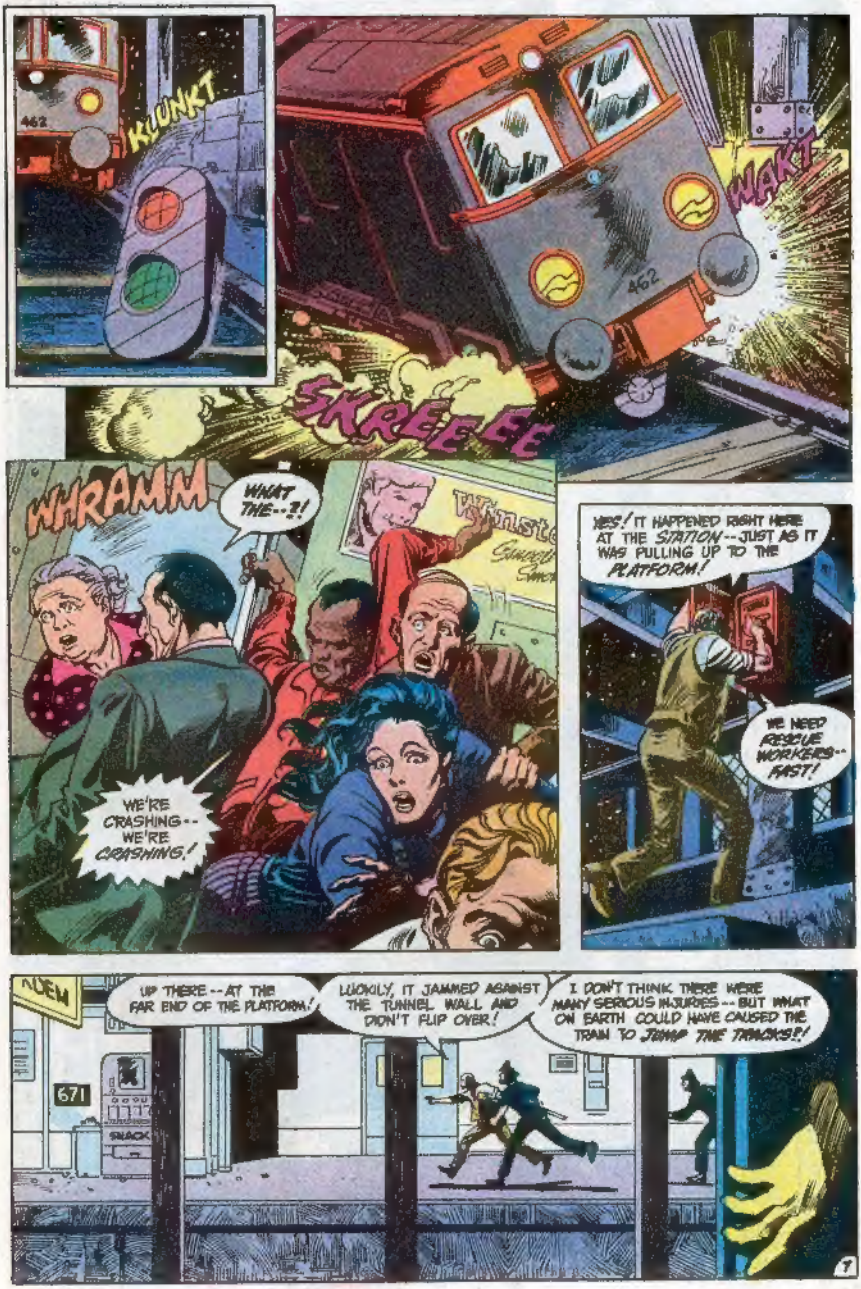
"AT FIRST I WAS HORRIFIED. JACQUES HAD FOUGHT WITH THE RESISTANCE AGAINST THE NAZIS--AND TO DISCOVER NOW THAT HE MAY HAVE BEEN A COLLABORATOR, SECRETING NAZI LOOT...
"... IT WAS TOO MUCH TO BEAR.


"I INFORMED THE SÛRETÉ OF MY DISCOVERY-- AND AFTER MUCH EMBARRASSED HESITATION, THE AUTHORITIES REVEALED THAT JACQUES HAD BEEN WORKING FOR THEM...
"... FOLLOWING FORTY-YEAR-OLD LEADS ON THE MISSING ART TREASURES.
"YOU CANNOT IMAGINE MY RELIEF."

THEY WERE PLEASED TO LEARN THAT JACQUES HAD RECOVERED A SMALL PORTION OF THE STOLEN ART, BUT IN RETURN FOR THE LIFE HE LOST IN THE PROCESS --
--THEY COULD OFFER NOTHING MORE THAN SYMPATHY.


"AFTER ARRANGING FOR SOMEONE TO COME AND COLLECT THE ART FROM MY ATTIC, I RETURNED HOME...
"... THERE TO RESUME THE BLEAK TASK OF PACKING UP MY ADOPTIVE FATHER'S PERSONAL EFFECTS.


"IT WAS IN HIS JOURNAL THAT I DISCOVERED A CRYPTIC NOTE: IT GAVE YESTERDAY'S DATE, THEN STILL WEEKS AWAY, AND SAID: 'FIGURINE TO HENRI LAROUCHE, 573 LORRAINE, MONTREAL.'"
THE ADDRESS! THEN THE MAN WE FOUND DEAD IN THE ROOMING HOUSE YESTERDAY WAS LAROUCHE!
OUI.
IT WAS AFTER DISCOVERING THAT NOTATION THAT I DECIDED TO COME IMMEDIATELY TO YOU, FATHER...WITHHOLDING THE FIGURINE FROM THE MEN WHO CAME FOR THE PAINTINGS.
WHAT?! YOU DIDN'T TELL THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES ABOUT THE JOURNAL?!
NO.
BUT WHY NOT, JULIA?
BECAUSE SOMEONE MURDERED THE MAN WHO RAISED ME AS HIS OWN DAUGHTER...
... AND IT IS MY BUSINESS TO LEARN WHO IT WAS-- AND TO PAY HIM BACK IN KIND!
JULIA... YOU'RE MY DAUGHTER... AND YET YOU'RE A COMPLETE STRANGER TO ME!
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS SHEER MADNESS!
SURELY YOU REALIZE THAT WHOEVER KILLED JACQUES HAS JUST MADE THREE ATTEMPTS ON OUR LIVES--
"...AND IS CERTAIN TO TRY AGAIN!"
BRAM
KATSH
462
6


KLUNK!
462
WHAM!
462
SKREEEE
WHRAMM
WHAT THE--?!
WE'RE CRASHING--WE'RE CRASHING!
YES! IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE AT THE STATION--JUST AS IT WAS PULLING UP TO THE PLATFORM!
WE NEED RESCUE WORKERS--FAST!
UP THERE--AT THE FAR END OF THE PLATFORM!
LUCKILY, IT JAMMED AGAINST THE TUNNEL WALL AND DIDN'T FLIP OVER!
I DON'T THINK THERE WERE MANY SERIOUS INJURIES--BUT WHAT ON EARTH COULD HAVE CAUSED THE TRAIN TO JUMP THE TRACKS?!
671
SNACK
7

AH... THERE THEY ARE... THE TARGETS... COMING RIGHT OUT INTO THE CLEAR--
WAIT! IT'S GETTING TOO CONFUSED... TOO MANY PEOPLE MILLING AROUND-- BLOCKING THE TARGETS FROM VIEW...
AND WHEN THE CROWD FINALLY DISPERSES...
THEY'RE GONE.
THEN MY WORK IS STILL NOT DONE.
TWO BLOCKS AWAY, UP IN THE HAUNTED STREET
I...I THINK IT'S TIME TO CALL IN OUTSIDE HELP, JULIA
I...I KNOW HOW TO CONTACT THE BATMAN BACK IN GOTHAM
NO! WE MUST AVENGE JACQUES REMARQUE'S DEATH ON OUR OWN! IT IS OUR DUTY TO HIS MEMORY!
HE RAISED ME AS HIS OWN-- AND SO DOING, HE ASSUMED THE FULL WEIGHT OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

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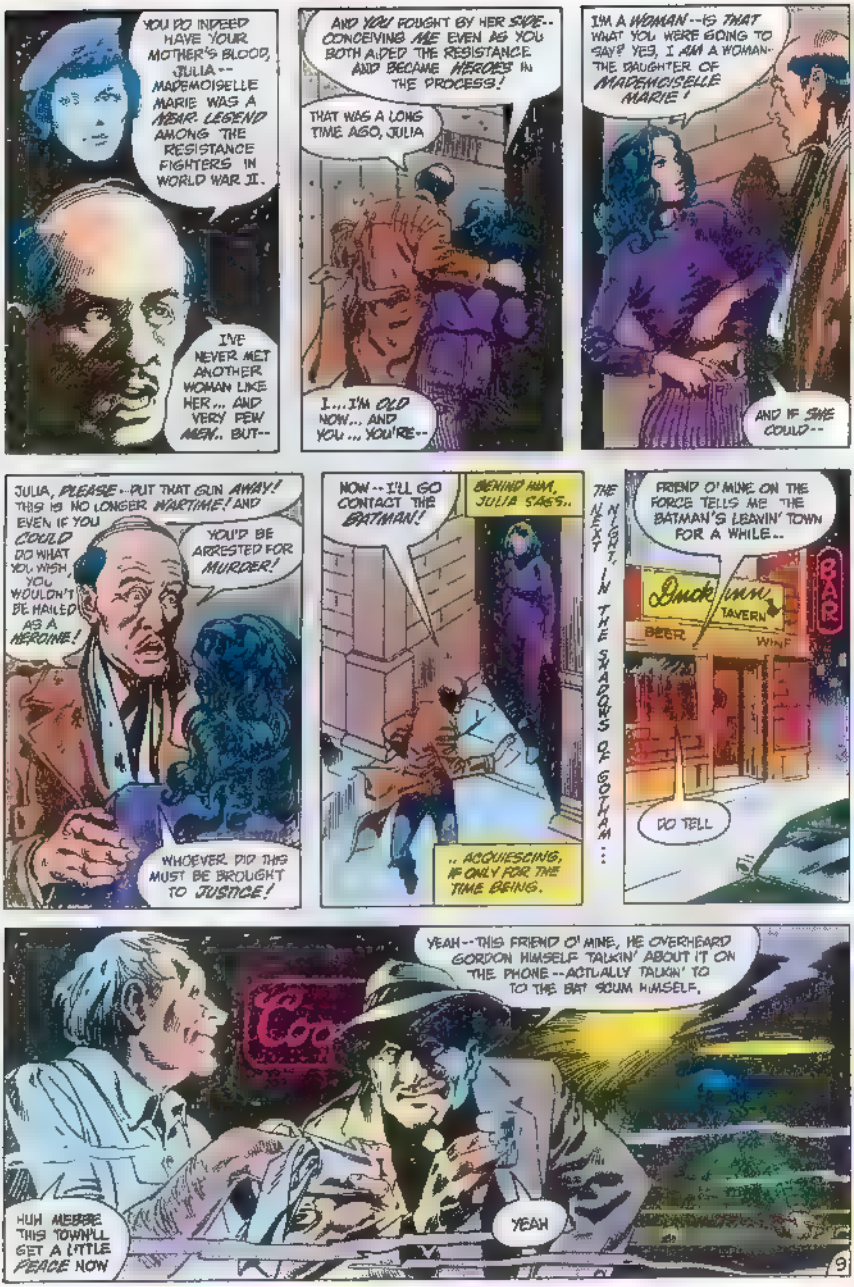
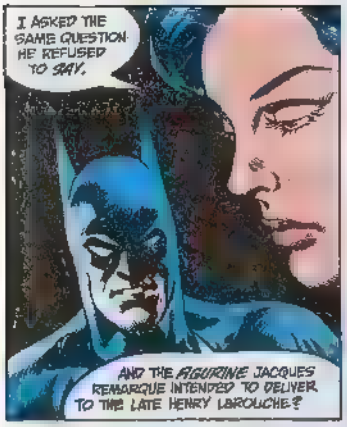

YOU DO INDEED HAVE YOUR MOTHER'S BLOOD, JULIA-- MADEMOISELLE MARIE WAS A NEAR LEGEND AMONG THE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS IN WORLD WAR II.
I'VE NEVER MET ANOTHER WOMAN LIKE HER... AND VERY FEW MEN.. BUT--
AND YOU FOUGHT BY HER SIDE-- CONCEIVING ME EVEN AS YOU BOTH AIDED THE RESISTANCE AND BECAME HEROES IN THE PROCESS!
THAT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, JULIA
I...I'M OLD NOW... AND YOU... YOU'RE--
I'M A WOMAN--IS THAT WHAT YOU WERE GOING TO SAY? YES, I AM A WOMAN-- THE DAUGHTER OF MADEMOISELLE MARIE!
AND IF SHE COULD--
JULIA, PLEASE--PUT THAT GUN AWAY! THIS IS NO LONGER WARTIME! AND EVEN IF YOU COULD DO WHAT YOU WISH, YOU WOULDN'T BE HAILED AS A HEROINE!
YOU'D BE ARRESTED FOR MURDER!
WHOEVER DID THIS MUST BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE!
NOW--I'LL GO CONTACT THE BATMAN!
BEHIND HIM, JULIA SAYS..
.. ACQUIESCING, IF ONLY FOR THE TIME BEING.
THE NEXT NIGHT, IN THE SHADOWS OF GOTHAM...
FRIEND O' MINE ON THE FORCE TELLS ME THE BATMAN'S LEAVIN' TOWN FOR A WHILE..
BAR
Duck Inn TAVERN
BEER
WINE
DO TELL
YEAH--THIS FRIEND O' MINE, HE OVERHEARD GORDON HIMSELF TALKIN' ABOUT IT ON THE PHONE--ACTUALLY TALKIN' TO TO THE BAT SCUM HIMSELF.
HUH MEBBE THIS TOWN'LL GET A LITTLE PEACE NOW
YEAH
9

SAY, LISTEN -- I WOKE UP AT 3:30 WITH A DREAM ABOUT THE BEAUTY PAGEANT DOWN IN ATLANTIC CITY, Y'KNOW, AND THERE WAS A DOZEN GORGEOUS BABES ALL IN A LINE...
UH-HUH
AN' THEN I REMEMBERED THIS DOUBLE SAWBUCK I MADE PLAYIN POOL THE DAY BEFORE
UH HUH
SO YOU WANT 33, 12, AN' 20 RIGHT, TONY?
TONY $20 33 12 20
I CAN DREAM, CAN'T I?
NOT SO FAST, ACE
UH OH
THE CIGAR BOX PRETTY PLEASE
OH JEEZ, HE'S A COP
THE CIGAR BOX!
PLEASE!
LISTEN, FRIEND, IF YOU'RE THINKIN' OF HAULIN' US IN, WE CAN--
SHUT UP, MAGGOT-FACE
10

NOW, AIN'T THAT CUTE? AN ILLEGAL NUMBERS GAME, WHICH MUST MEAN THE GUYS NEVER HEARD O' THE STATE LOTTERY--YOU KNOW, THE THING THAT LOWERS THE TAXES SINKS LIKE YOU NEVER PAY!
LOOK, MAN, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE JS N--
RELAX, MAGGOT-FACE, I AIN'T TAKIN' YOU IN--I'M JUST TAKIN' MY CUT OUT--NINETY PERCENT.
BUT DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA--I GOT NO LOVE FOR YOU OR THE TOWN'S NEW MR BIG WHO'S RUNNIN' ALL THESE SLEAZY PENNY-ANTE RACKETS..
IN FACT, I WANTED TO SQUASH THIS NEW MR BIG LIKE A BUG--BEFORE COMMISSIONER GORDON TIED MY HANDS AND MY FEET
SO YOU JUST TELL MR BIG I'M A COP WITH A BEEF--AN' IF I CAN'T SQUASH HIM, I'M READY TO JOIN.
SMASH!
NAME'S BULLOCK
I'LL BE WAITIN' FOR WORD ON A MEET-TIME.
MY NUMBERS... MY DREAM... MY DOUBLE-SAWBUCK...!
AND AT THAT SAME MOMENT, ON THE BANK OF THE SAINT LAWRENCE RIVER IN MONTREAL...
JASON--OR ROBIN, I SHOULD SAY--WAS GOOD ABOUT STAYING BEHIND IN GOTHAM..
PERHAPS HE'S MORE MATURE THAN I GIVE HIM CREDIT FOR
ANYWAY, ALFRED SAID TO MEET ON THE QUAI ALEXANDRA--AND THERE THEY ARE...

NOW, TELL ME, FATHER DO YOU REALLY THINK THE BATMAN WILL
I'M HERE
YES, JULIA. I DO.
THE BATMAN -- AND NO LESS IMPOSING THAN THE FIRST TIME WE MET *
* IN TBC #'s 501 + 502. -- Len
AND YOU, JULIA LEAD A LIFE NO CALMER THAN BEFORE
AH PERHAPS YOU SHOULD APPRISE THE BATMAN OF OUR SITUATION JULIA
VERY WELL FATHER AFTER ALL THIS IS NOT WARTIME.
AND TEN MINUTES LATER...
THEN YOU'RE BOTH LUCKY TO BE ALIVE
ALFRED, YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED ME N SOONER
I WAS FOOLISH, SIR -- I CAN ONLY ATTRIBUTE IT TO GUILT AT HAVING FAILED JULIA IN THE PAST...
DID THE SURETÉ IN PARIS SAY WHOM THEY SUSPECTED OF HAVING THE REST OF THE LOOTED ART?
NO ONE, BATMAN
THEY BELIEVE IT IS STILL HIDDEN SOMEWHERE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS ALTHOUGH THEY ALSO BELIEVE IT MAY BE UNCOVERED ANY DAY NOW.
THEY FEEL THE SMALL CACHE OBTAINED BY JACQUES PROVES THAT SOMEONE KNOWS THE LOCATION
AS FOR WHO IS AFTER THE ART THE OFFICIAL MENTIONED ONLY POSSIBILITIES - FORMER NAZIS, FRENCH COLLABORATORS, GANGSTERS, EVEN TERRORISTS
WHY TERRORISTS?
2

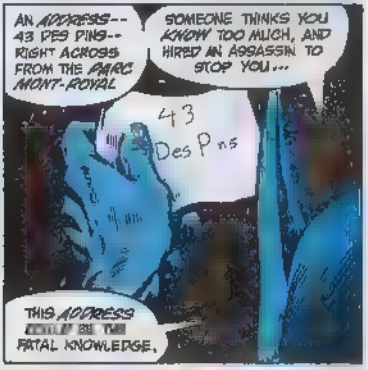

I ASKED THE SAME QUESTION HE REFUSED TO SAY.
AND THE FIGURINE JACQUES REMARQUE INTENDED TO DELIVER TO THE LATE HENRY LAROUCHE?

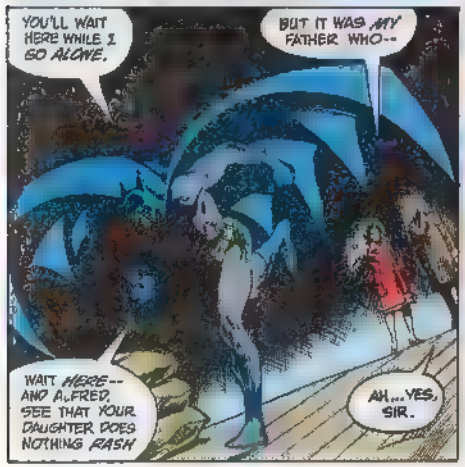
I HAVE IT RIGHT HERE, BATMAN -- AND I AM CONVINCED IT IS SOMEHOW THE KEY TO THE REST OF THE STOLEN ART.
AND TO JACQUES REMARQUE'S MURDERER.

IT'S HOLLOW...
TAP TAP

AND THIS FELT [redacted] HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH--
--REATTACHED WITH AN [redacted] LEAVING A STAIN THROUGH THE FELT.

HOLLOW... BUT NOT EMPTY -- A FACT JACQUES APPARENTLY DID NOT KNOW, WHILE LAROUCHE DID.

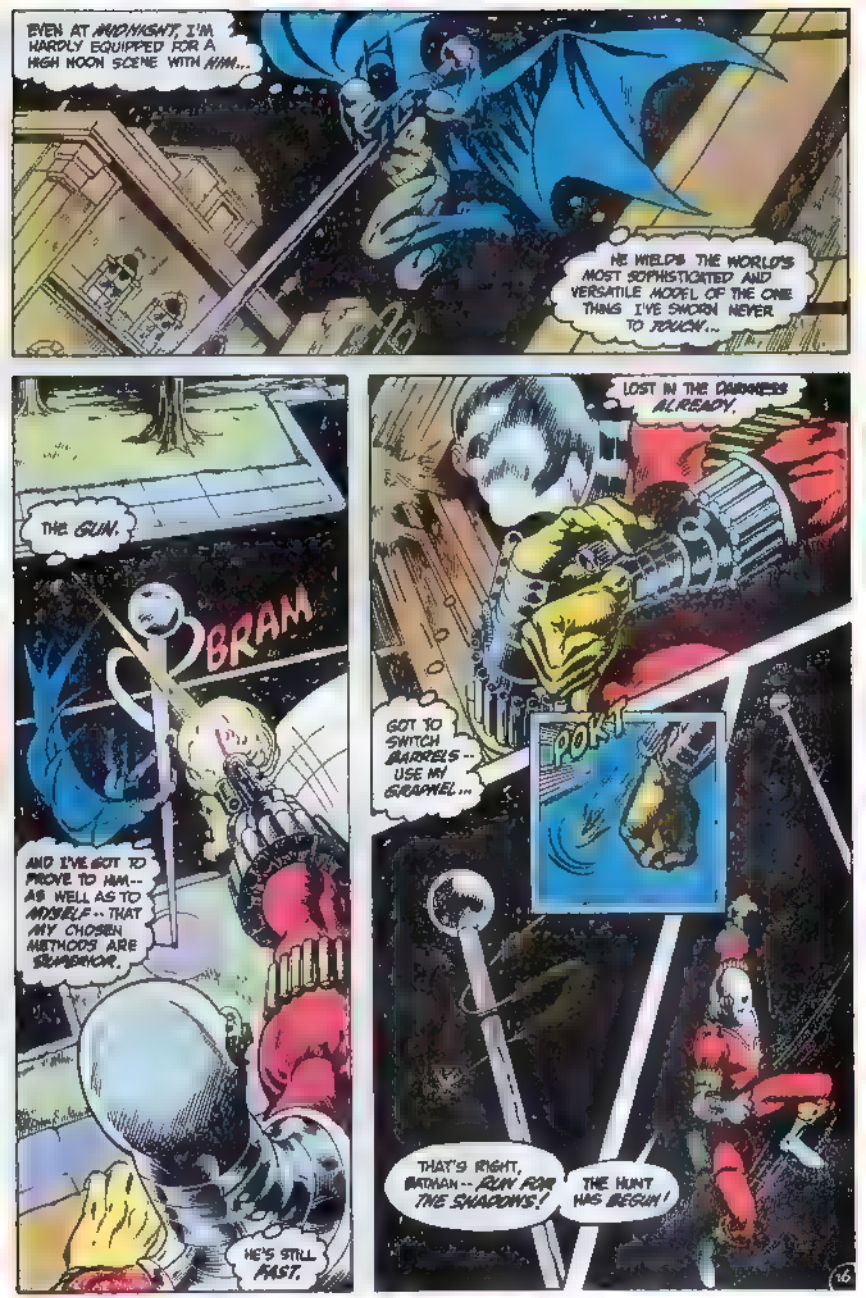

AN ADDRESS-- 43 DES PINS-- RIGHT ACROSS FROM THE PARC MONT-ROYAL
SOMEONE THINKS YOU KNOW TOO MUCH, AND HIRED AN ASSASSIN TO STOP YOU...
43
Des Pins
THIS ADDRESS [redacted] THE FATAL KNOWLEDGE.


YOU'LL WAIT HERE WHILE I GO ALONE.
BUT IT WAS MY FATHER WHO--
WAIT HERE-- AND ALFRED, SEE THAT YOUR DAUGHTER DOES NOTHING RASH
AH... YES, SIR.

DAMN HIM-- SO SMUG AND--
COME, JULIA, WE'LL... TALK.

BASED ON WHAT JULIA AND ALFRED TOLD ME ABOUT THE SNIPER ATTACKS AND IF THOSE RUBE GOLDBERG ONCE-REMOVED SHOTS WERE INDEED DELIBERATE--
--THEN THE SNIPER COULD BE ONLY ONE MAN...
DEADSHOT
"HIS REAL NAME IS FLOYD LAWTON SCION OF A WEALTHY GOTHAM FAMILY WHO ONCE POSED AS A CRIME-FIGHTER".
" DEMONSTRATES INCREDIBLE MARKSMANSHIP WITH GUNS TO STOW CRIMINALS, BUT NEVER AIMING DIRECTLY AT THEM, INSTEAD MAKING A GAME OF PEPPERING SHOTS
"BUT IT WAS ALL A RUSE TO DISCREDIT ME SO HE COULD ULTIMATELY BECOME AN UNDERWORLD KINGPIN
"AND HIS REPEATED FAILURE'S HAVE INSPIRED A HATRED FOR ME WHOSE PASSION IS NEARLY UNMATCHED AMONG ALL MY FOES "
I HARDLY RELISH THE THOUGHT OF FACING HIM AGAIN -- BUT HERE'S THE ADDRESS.
FOR THE BATMAN, FEW LOCKS ARE
FILLED WITH EVEN OLDER MASTERPIECES.
THESE OLD CRATES.
AND THE WINDOW LOCK DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A PROBLEM...

EH-?
THE DOORKNOB
"SOMEONE'S COMING IN..."
FREEZE!
AYYA! WHO--
THAT'S ENOUGH, ARMAND-- OUR LITTLE TRAP HAS SUCCEEDED..
..BUT I MUST ADMIT, BATMAN, I NEVER EXPECTED TO SNARE YOU.
STILL, IT'LL BE MY PLEASURE TO FINALLY NAIL THE ONE TARGET I'VE WANTED MORE THAN ANY OTHER.
IT'S DEADSHOT, ALL RIGHT...
..BUT THIS IS NO TIME TO FACE HIM DOWN
GOT TO MOVE--
GRAM
CHEEVEW
--LIKE LIGHTNING.


EVEN AT MIDNIGHT, I'M HARDLY EQUIPPED FOR A HIGH NOON SCENE WITH HIM...
HE WIELDS THE WORLD'S MOST SOPHISTICATED AND VERSATILE MODEL OF THE ONE THING I'VE SWORN NEVER TO TOUCH...
THE GUN.
BRAM
AND I'VE GOT TO PROVE TO HIM-- AS WELL AS TO MYSELF -- THAT MY CHOSEN METHODS ARE SUPERIOR.
HE'S STILL FAST.
LOST IN THE DARKNESS ALREADY.
GOT TO SWITCH BARRELS -- USE MY GRAPNEL...
POK!
THAT'S RIGHT, BATMAN -- RUN FOR THE SHADOWS!
THE HUNT HAS BEGUN!

AND BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS DONE, I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD ON MY WALL!
BAOUM
THE SHOCK OF SEEING ME HAS ALMOST UNHINGED HIM.
...AND HE HATES ME SO MUCH THAT HE ISN'T EVEN TRYING HIS REMOTE TRICK SHOTS...
ALL HE CARES ABOUT IS PLANTING A MAGNUM SLUG RIGHT BETWEEN MY SHOULDER BLADES!
AT LEAST THIS PARK OFFERS PLENTY OF COVER... ALMOST LIKE A JUNGLE IN THE DARK.
GOT TO EXPLOIT IT-- WITH GUERRILLA TACTICS.
ALL RIGHT, BATMAN, I KNOW YOU'RE OUT THERE AND I--
WAIT A MINUTE--WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? WHY AM I GIVING AWAY MY POSITION?!
CAN'T LET THE QUARRY TAKE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EDGE--GOT TO BE AS MUCH OF A NIGHT-CREATURE AS HE IS..
GOT TO HUNT HIM COLDLY, CALMLY, STALK HIM WITH ALL THE TOTAL CUNNING AND SILENCE OF DEATH.
17

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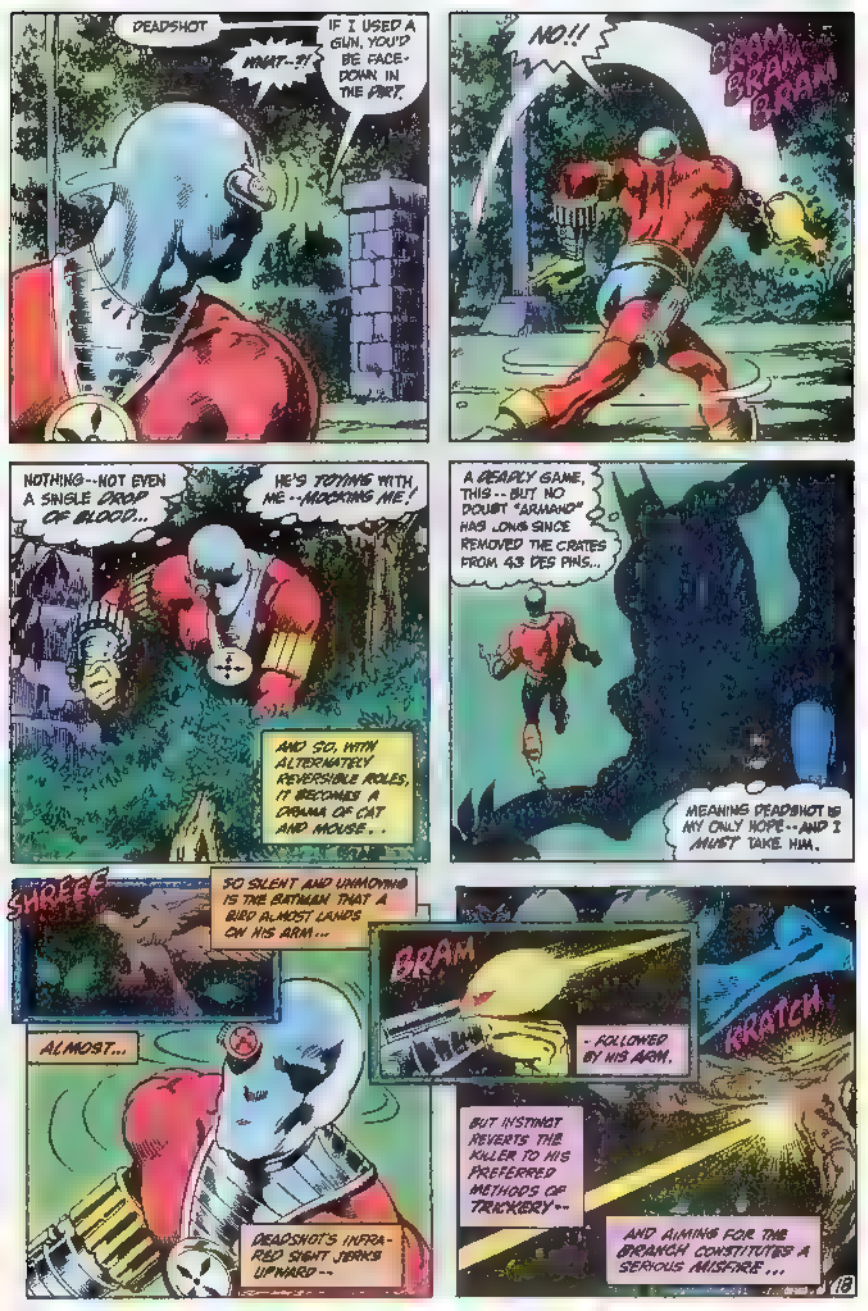

DEADSHOT
WHAT--?!
IF I USED A GUN, YOU'D BE FACE-DOWN IN THE DIRT.
NO!!
BRAM BRAM BRAM
NOTHING--NOT EVEN A SINGLE DROP OF BLOOD..
HE'S TOYING WITH ME--MOCKING ME!
AND SO, WITH ALTERNATELY REVERSIBLE ROLES, IT BECOMES A CHAMA OF CAT AND MOUSE..
A DEADLY GAME, THIS--BUT NO DOUBT "ARMAND" HAS LONG SINCE REMOVED THE CRATES FROM 43 DES PINS..
MEANING DEADSHOT IS MY ONLY HOPE--AND I MUST TAKE HIM.
SHREEE
SO SILENT AND UNMOVING IS THE BATMAN THAT A BIRD ALMOST LANDS ON HIS ARM...
BRAM
- FOLLOWED BY HIS ARM.
KRATCH
ALMOST...
DEADSHOT'S INFRA-RED SIGHT JERKS UPWARD--
BUT INSTINCT REVERTS THE KILLER TO HIS PREFERRED METHODS OF TRICKERY--
AND AIMING FOR THE BRANCH CONSTITUTES A SERIOUS MISFIRE...

..SINCE IT PERMITS THE AGILE BATMAN TO TURN SURE DEATH INTO HIS FIRST OFFENSIVE ONSLAUGHT OF THE WIGHT
UNOK
GUH-H!
.. AS WELL AS HIS SECOND..
SHACK
..AND HIS THIRD--
GHUDD
--BEFORE A LUCKY SWIPE OF METAL-SHEATHED ARM--
FRAKK
--SENDS HIS MIND REELING--
--AND HIS BODY DIVING FOR NEW COVER
BRAAK
THUS, GROGGY, HE WILL BE VERY LUCKY TO REACH IT.

PLEASE, JULIA - LET'S GO BACK TO THE QUAY
I WAS WRONG TO LET YOU TALK ME INTO COMING HERE
BUT WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL IT MAKE IF WE WAIT HERE IN THE PARK OR-
LOOK! DO YOU SEE THAT BLACK SHAPE IN THE TREES?! IT LOOKED LIKE THE BATMAN'S CAPE! HE MUST BE CHASING THE KILLER!
THE ONE WHO KILLED JACQUES REMARQUE WHO KILLED MY FATHER!
I CAN'T STAND IT!
AND JULIA! PUT AWAY THAT GUN! COME BACK! I'M YOUR FATHER!
ME!!
..LUCKY TO GET AWAY FROM-
WHAT?! THAT'S ALFRED'S VOICE BUT WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?!
HE'S HERE - I KNOW HE IS!
THE WOMAN.. MY ORIGINAL TARGET..!
THE ONE I WAS PAID TO STALK!
YOU'RE HERE, MURDERER.. AND YOU SHOT MY FATHER! DO YOU HEAR ME?!

EVEN A KNIFE CAN CUT BREAD. EVEN A SWORD - AN OAK FIREWOOD. EVEN A SPEAR CAN SUPPORT A TENT...
OF ALL THE INVENTIONS OF MAN'S HAND, ONLY THE GUN WAS CONCEIVED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF SPILLING BLOOD.
ITS PRECISION MECHANICS ARE DIRECTLY INVERSED WITH THE MALEVOLENT AND ITS DISTANCE OF USE ITS SEPARATION FROM TARGET AND THUS FROM EMOTION, MAKE THE ACT OF KILLING BOTH EASY AND COWARDLY
TWO PEOPLE, NOW, ARE UNDER THE SPELL OF ITS COLD AND HEAVY METAL...
ONE OF THEM IS SURELY DESTINED TO FALL.
JULIA!
AND AGAIN DEADSHOT HAS FORGOTTEN ALL TRICKERY- DRAWING A DIRECT BEAD ON HER
WHAT CAN I DO?! THERE'S NO TIME TO REACH HIM--
SO HE DOES THE ONLY THING POSSIBLE: THE IMPOSSIBLE
DEADSHOT--OVER HERE-- THE BROAD SIDE OF A BARN!
- AND I DON'T EVEN HAVE A CLEAR THROW AT HIM WITH MY BATARANG -- TOO MANY TREES.
MOMENTARILY DISTRACTING THE ASSASSIN, HE HURLS HIS BATARANG
..BUT HIS TARGET IS NOT THE TREE SCREENED KILLER...

RANDOM THOUGHTS: ON THE CONVENTION TRAIL, 1983

I like flying, I really do! (Providing I'm in an airplane ... no matter what the ads said, I don't believe a man can fly!) I hate getting to and from airports, though, and since I'm a bit paranoid about missing flights I tend to allow a little extra time to get to the airport (just in case) and inevitably find myself hanging around for an hour or two before I can board my flight. Thank God for airport bookstores, coffee shops and, I guess, cocktail lounges. Getting home after a trip is **always** a hassle. I live in Connecticut, about seventy miles from N.Y. airports and whether I have my car or hop a limo, the ground trip home seems to tire me more than the flight.

I become more aware of these attitudes this summer as just about every weekend I traveled to a distant city to attend a comic convention, the most ambitious convention tour ever undertaken by DC and/or yours truly. With Sal Amendola (our Talent Coordinator) for company on every trip and various other DC luminaries on some of them we attended conventions at Anaheim, CA; New York; Philadelphia, PA; Ottawa, Canada; Chicago, IL; San Diego, CA; Orlando, FL; still to come are Boston, Hartford, Wichita and New York again. I missed Houston, though I was scheduled to go and a small show in the Washington, D.C. area was cancelled.

I'm writing this a few days before Labor Day with Bob Rozakis (and the typesetter) hovering anxiously in the background. (copy was due September 1st ... late again!) A jumble of fleeting remembrances, impressions and random thoughts vie for attention.

I remember;

—Sal Amendola calling my home from Houston to make sure I was still alive. He'd flown there from Washington, D.C. where he had just completed teaching a week-long seminar on drawing S.F. comics at the Smithsonian Institute. He expected to meet me at the Houston convention. A rumor spread on the convention floor that I had collapsed, passed out or had been taken to the hospital in a state of exhaustion. All untrue, of course ... but I was tired and not feeling well enough to take the trip. Still, Sal's concern (and the rumor-monger's) was touching.

—The wonderful reception afforded DC's 16MM sound film which was shown at least once each convention. It's about ten minutes long and after a brief retrospective, it outlines all the new and exciting comics coming from DC for the rest of '83 and some of '84.

—Having Murphy Anderson (and Mrs. "Murph") show up, unexpectedly, at many of the conventions. Murph has been away from comics for about 10 years while he handled the immense task of producing a monthly preventive maintenance magazine for the U.S. Army. He's finished with that and his byline and familiar style will be gracing the pages of DC Comics again! Welcome back, Murph.

—Meeting Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel at San Diego. We've met before, of course, and we didn't have too much time to talk this time but it's always good to meet Superman's creators.

—Chicago and San Diego which continue to be among the best attended and best organized cons around. (Although there was a massive room foul-up at Chicago this year, it was the hotel's fault.) Lotsa pros, lotsa fans and dealers at both.

—The Ottawa con held on a modern college campus. We slept in small, clean dorm rooms (Yo Gods! **No TV!**) Some pros thought that wasn't sophisticated enough, I guess, and opted for hotel accommodations nearby. Sal and I (the DC contingent) stayed and had fun! Sloshing beer with college guys made me feel young again ... Briefly.

—Talking to so many of our readers and fans. About comics in general and DC Comics in particular. Most of 'em thought comics today are more exciting than they've been in years.

—Wishing I could have talked to more.

—Grateful to be alive after being attacked (sort of) by about a half dozen crazed DC writers upon my return to the hotel in San Diego. I was coming home from a nice dinner at a Mexican restaurant down at the harbor and these six loonies had concocted an idea for a new mini-series and were looking for me to approve the idea. They charged at me as I entered the lobby and in exchange for sparing my life I gave them the go ahead ... and the **DC Challenge** was born! (More on that later.)

—Talking with DC regulars and old friends Roy Thomas, Gerry Conway, Dan Jurgens, Mark Evanier, Dan Spiegel, Jerry Ordway, Mike Machlan, Jan Strnad, Don Newton, Steve Gerber and others (whose names I will remember the moment this goes to press) who live and work too far from the home office for me to see regularly.

—All those hotel rooms, all those restaurant meals, all those rented cars, all those cab rides. All those carefully collected receipts for my expense vouchers.

—Talking comics with old friends Mike Friedrich (of Star* Reach) and Dez Skinn (Editor of Warrior, a top-notch British comic).

—Beating Marvel (by a nose!) at the **Comics Feud**, a San Diego Con version of **The Family Feud!** They'll be after us next year, with blood in their eyes, at a re-match.

—The projector breaking down at Philadelphia about 2 minutes into our film and Sal Amendola and me having to do about 15 minutes of impromptu chatter and fielding questions from the audience while a new projector was found and set-up.

—The unprecedented steak 'n' eggs breakfast for attending pros given by the new guys on the block, Multi-Media conventions, at Philadelphia. Thanks, guys.

—The hotel itself at the aforementioned Multi-Media Con in Philly. Brand new and beautiful!

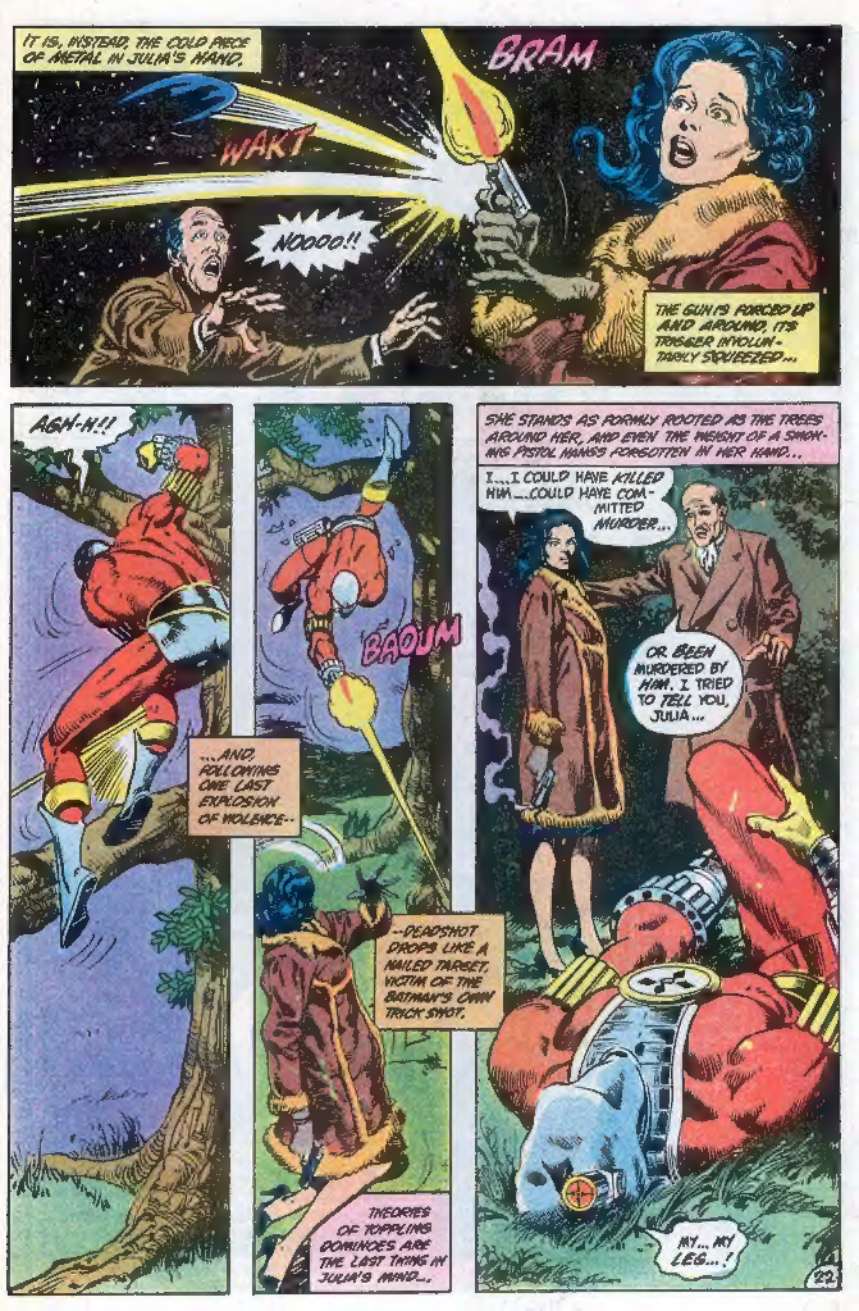
—Talking to aspiring writers and artists as Sal Amendola and I looked at their portfolios. So many reminded me of myself some thirty-odd years ago. Incidentally, we're being forced to temporarily shelve our talent search for a time. We've been overwhelmed by samples mailed to us and folk who have talked to us and showed us samples at conventions. We're going to have to spend some time working closely with the talent that has surfaced and responding to all who have submitted samples. If you've thought of submitting, please hang on for a while as we dig out. We'll give you the go-ahead in this column as soon as all's clear.

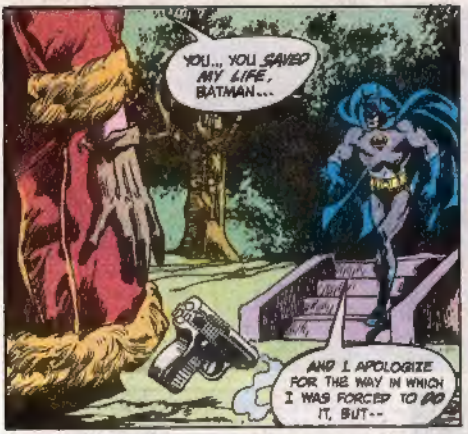
—Seeing and chatting with our comic distributors all of whom I was lucky enough to meet at a meeting on the Warner's lot in L.A. earlier this year.

—Hearing the universally positive attitudes expressed by publishers, distributors, dealers and fans about the future of comics in this country.

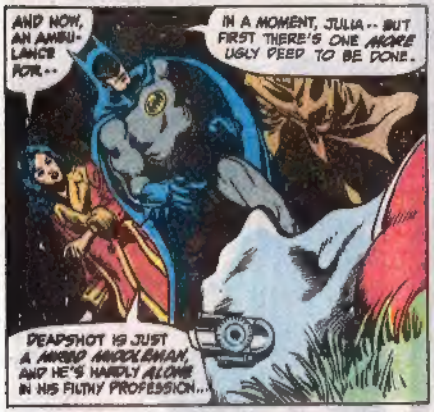
Thank you and Good Afternoon.

Dick


IT IS, INSTEAD, THE COLD PIECE OF METAL IN JULIA'S HAND.
BRAM
WAKT
NOOOO!!
THE GUN IS FORCED UP AND AROUND, ITS TRIGGER INVOLUNTARILY SQUEEZED...
AGH-H!!
BAOUM
...AND, FOLLOWING ONE LAST EXPLOSION OF VIOLENCE--
--DEADSHOT DROPS LIKE A NAILED TARGET, VICTIM OF THE BATMAN'S OWN TRICK SHOT.
THEORIES OF TOPPLING DOMINOES ARE THE LAST THING IN JULIA'S MIND...
SHE STANDS AS FORMALLY ROOTED AS THE TREES AROUND HER, AND EVEN THE WEIGHT OF A SMOKING PISTOL MANGY FORGOTTEN IN HER HAND...
I...I COULD HAVE KILLED HIM...COULD HAVE COMMITTED MURDER...
OR BEEN MURDERED BY HIM. I TRIED TO TELL YOU, JULIA...
MY... MY LEG...!
22


YOU... YOU SAVED MY LIFE, BATMAN...
AND I APOLOGIZE FOR THE WAY IN WHICH I WAS FORCED TO DO IT, BUT--

NO--DON'T BLAME YOURSELF! YOU... YOU TAUGHT ME A VALUABLE LESSON.
REVENGE IS NOT THE HAPPY ENDING OF A MOVIE. IT IS... AN UGLINESS OF BLOOD.


AND NOW, AN AMBULANCE FOR...
IN A MOMENT, JULIA-- BUT FIRST THERE'S ONE MORE UGLY DEED TO BE DONE.
DEADSHOT IS JUST A MINOR MUSCLEMAN, AND HE'S HARDLY ALONE IN HIS FILTHY PROFESSION...

THE PEOPLE WHO EMPLOYED HIM STILL WANT YOU DEAD, AND THEY WON'T HESITATE TO HIRE ONE OF HIS COLLEAGUES.
NOW-- WHO ARE THEY, DEADSHOT?!
N-NO... W-WON'T TALK...

WHO PAID YOU TO KILL THIS WOMAN?!
SWAK
S-STOP... N-NO MORE... I... I'LL TALK... IT... IT WAS--

--JACQUES... REMARQUE
CONCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF DETECTIVE:
"FACING DEATH, BLINDLY"
--ON SALE IN TWO WEEKS!

DCP

Digital Comics Preservation

If you think you can do better,
then you should give it a try.